

There is a perception in the coverage that Al Qaida may be as strong today as they were prior to September the 11th. That's just simply not the case. I think the report will say, since 2001, not prior to September the 11th, 2001.

Secondly, that because of the actions we have taken, Al Qaida is weaker today than they would have been. They are still a threat. They are still dangerous. And that is why it is important that we succeed in Afghanistan and Iraq and anywhere else we find them. And that's our strategy, is to stay on the offense against Al Qaida.

Elaine [Elaine Quijano, Cable News Network] asked the question, is it Al Qaida in Iraq? Yes, it is Al Qaida, just like it's Al Qaida in parts of Pakistan. And I'm working with President Musharraf to be able to—he doesn't want them in his country; he doesn't want foreign fighters in his outposts of his country. And so we're working to make sure that we continue to keep the pressure on Al Qaida.

But no question, Al Qaida is dangerous for the American people, and that's why—as well as other people that love freedom—and that's why we're working hard with allies and friends to enhance our intelligence. That's why we need terrorist surveillance programs. That's why it's important for us to keep—another thing, I would hope Congress would modernize that bill. And that's why we're keeping on the offense.

Ultimately, the way to defeat these radicals and extremists is to offer alternative ways of life so that they're unable to recruit; that they can use—they like to use frustration and hopelessness. The societies that don't provide hope will become the societies where Al Qaida has got the capacity to convince a youngster to go blow himself up. What we need to do is help governments provide brighter futures for their people so they won't sign up.

And the fundamental question facing the world on this issue is whether or not it makes sense to try to promote an alternative ideology. I happen to think it does. They say, "He's idealistic." Yes, I'm idealistic, but I'm also realistic in understanding if there is not an alternative ideology presented, these thugs will be able to continue to recruit.

They'll use hopelessness to be able to recruit. And so it's—thank you for asking that question.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:31 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, and Vice Presidents Adil Abd Al-Mahdi and Tariq al-Hashimi of Iraq; former Chief of Staff to the Vice President I. Lewis Libby; Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. The President also referred to the amendment by Senators Harry Reid and Carl Levin to H.R. 2206. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this news conference.

## **Proclamation 8161—Parents' Day, 2007**

*July 12, 2007*

*By the President of the United States of America*

### **A Proclamation**

On Parents' Day, America honors our mothers and fathers for their extraordinary devotion and for the great sacrifices they make to provide a hopeful and promising future for their children.

The guidance and unconditional love of parents help create a nurturing environment so children can grow and reach their full potential. Parents work to impart to their children the strength and determination to follow their dreams and the courage to do what is right. They shape the character of their children by sharing their wisdom and setting a positive example. As role models, parents also instill the values and principles that help prepare children to be responsible adults and good citizens.

My Administration is committed to strengthening American families by supporting Federal, State, and faith-based and community programs that promote healthy marriages and responsible parenting. Parents

are a child's first teachers, and we recognize their critical role in helping children do well in school. My Administration is committed to helping parents and schools ensure that every child has the best opportunity to learn and succeed.

On Parents' Day, we pay tribute to mothers and fathers and celebrate the special bonds of love between parents and their children. We also express our deep gratitude to parents who serve in the Armed Forces and those whose sons and daughters have answered the call to defend our country. Our Nation is grateful for their honorable service and for the sacrifices family members make as their loved ones work to advance the cause of freedom.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States and consistent with Public Law 103–362, as amended, do hereby proclaim Sunday, July 22, 2007, as Parents' Day. I call upon citizens, private organizations, and governmental bodies at all levels to engage in activities and educational efforts that recognize, support, and honor parents, and I encourage American sons and daughters to convey their love, respect, and appreciation to their parents.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:07 a.m., July 13, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 16.

**Memorandum on Waiver of Limitation on Obligation and Expenditure of \$642.5 Million in Fiscal Year 2007 Economic Support Funds for Iraq**

*July 12, 2007*

Presidential Determination No. 2007–27

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Waiver of Limitation on Obligation and Expenditure of \$642.5 million in Fiscal Year 2007 Economic Support Funds for Iraq

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 1314(c)(2) of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110–28) (the "Act"), I hereby waive the requirements of section 1314(c)(1) for \$642.5 million of Fiscal Year 2007 Economic Support Funds for Iraq and direct you to submit to the Congress this determination along with the certification in accordance with section 1314(c)(2) of the Act.

You are hereby directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

**Message to the Congress Transmitting the Initial Benchmark Assessment Report**

*July 12, 2007*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Consistent with section 1314 of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110–28) (the "Act"), attached is the report that assesses the status of each of the 18 Iraqi benchmarks contained in the Act and declares whether satisfactory progress toward meeting these benchmarks is, or is not, being achieved.

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense; Commander, Multi-National Forces—Iraq; the United States Ambassador to Iraq;